



**AMENDED CLAIM SET:**

1. (currently amended) Diagnostic beads having a diameter of 2 – 5 mm for the detection of occult blood in animal excreta, especially for use in an animal litter, said beads having a size and shape similar to that of the litter and being homogeneously distributable throughout the litter, said beads comprising a particulate material and a detection composition attached to said particulate material, wherein the detection composition comprises a chromogen, a peroxide, an enhancer, ascorbic acid, and a binder, said chromogen being selected to react with occult blood in the animal excreta so as to produce a visible and immediate color change when excreta containing blood comes into contact with said diagnostic beads.

2. (previously presented) Diagnostic beads according to claim 4, wherein the particulate material comprises perlite.

3. (cancelled).

4. (original) Diagnostic beads according to claim 1, wherein the particulate material is selected from the group consisting of: wood-based beads, wood-based beads coated with titanium dioxide, wood-based beads coated with calcium carbonate, wood-based beads coated with starch, silica gel beads, quartz beads, polystyrene beads, alumino silicates, clay and cellulose beads.

5. (previously presented) Diagnostic beads according to claim 1, wherein the chromogen is 3,3,5,5-tetramethylbenzidine.

6. (original) Diagnostic beads according to claim 1, wherein the enhancer is 6-methoxyquinoline.

7. (original) Diagnostic beads according to claim 1, wherein the peroxide is cumene hydroperoxide.

8. (cancelled).

9. (previously presented) Diagnostic beads according to claim 1, wherein the binder is a starch derivative.

10. (original) Diagnostic beads according to claim 1, wherein the binder comprises an organic polymer capable of adhering to the particulate material

11. (previously presented) Diagnostic beads according to claim 10, wherein the organic polymer material is selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl pyrrolidone, carboxymethyl cellulose, ethyl cellulose, and acrylic latex.

12. (original) Diagnostic beads according to claim 1, further comprising at least one additional binder and an inorganic filler.

13. (previously presented) Diagnostic beads according to claim 12, wherein the inorganic filler is selected from at least one of calcium carbonate and alumina.

14. (original) Diagnostic beads according to claim 1, further comprising at least one additive.

15. (original) Diagnostic beads according to claim 14, wherein the additive is selected from the group consisting of wetting agents or metal ion sequestrants.

16. (currently amended) An animal litter for the detection of blood in animal excreta comprising diagnostic beads, as defined in any one of claims 1, 2, 4-7, and 9-15, wherein said beads have a size and shape similar to that of the litter and are homogeneously distributed throughout the litter.

17. (cancelled).

18. (original) An animal litter according to claim 16, comprising 5-10% diagnostic beads.

19. (original) An animal litter according to claim 16, wherein the animal litter is a cat litter.

20. (previously presented) A method for producing diagnostic beads useful for the detection of occult blood in animal excreta, comprising producing a detection composition and applying said detection composition to a particulate material, wherein the detection composition comprises a chromogen, a peroxide, an enhancer, ascorbic acid, and a binder, said chromogen being selected to react to occult blood in animal excreta so as to produce a visible color change when excreta containing blood comes into contact with said diagnostic beads.

21. (previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein the particulate material comprises perlite.

22. (cancelled).

23. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the particulate material is selected from the group consisting of: wood-based beads, wood-based beads coated with titanium dioxide, wood-based beads coated with calcium carbonate, silica gel beads, quartz beads, polystyrene beads, alumino silicates, clay and cellulose beads.

24. (previously presented) A method according to claim 20, wherein the chromogen is 3,3',5,5'-tetramethylbenzidine.

25. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the enhancer is 6-methoxyquinoline.

26. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the peroxide is cumene hydroperoxide.

27. (cancelled).

28. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the binder comprises a starch derivative.

29. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the binder comprises an organic polymer capable of adhering to the particulate material.

30. (original) A method according to claim 29, wherein the organic polymer material is selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl pyrrolidone, carboxymethyl cellulose, ethyl cellulose, and acrylic latex.

31. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the detection composition is applied to the particulate material as a dry powder.

32. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the detection composition is applied to the particulate material as a liquid spray.

33. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the step of applying the detection composition comprises combining said detection composition with a binder and a filler to produce a powder, moistening the particulate material, and coating said particulate material with said powder.

34. (original) A method according to claim 33, wherein the binder comprises a starch derivative and the filler is comprised of alumina and calcium carbonate.

35. (original) A method according to claim 33, wherein the binder further comprises

carboxymethyl cellulose.

36. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the step of applying the detection composition comprises dissolving said detection composition in an alcohol and sodium hydroxide solution and spraying the resultant solution onto said particulate material.

37. (previously presented) A method according to claim 20, wherein the diagnostic beads further comprise at least one additive.

38. (original) A method according to claim 37, wherein the additive is selected from the group consisting of wetting agents or metal ion sequestrants.

39. (previously presented) A method for producing diagnostic beads useful for the detection of occult blood in animal excreta, comprising producing a detection composition, combining said detection solution with a particulate material and at least one binder, and producing diagnostic beads through a granulation process, wherein the detection composition comprises a chromogen, a peroxide, an enhancer, ascorbic acid, and a binder, said chromogen being selected to react to occult blood in animal excreta so as to produce a visible color change when excreta containing blood comes into contact with said diagnostic beads.

40. (original) A method according to claim 39, wherein the particulate material is selected from the group consisting of: wood-based beads, wood-based beads coated with titanium dioxide, wood-based beads coated with calcium carbonate, wood-based beads coated with starch, silica gel beads, quartz beads, polystyrene beads, alumino silicates, clay and cellulose beads.

41. (previously presented) A method according to claim 40, wherein the particulate material comprises perlite.

42. (cancelled).

43. (previously presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein the chromogen is 3,3',5,5'-tetramethylbenzidine.

44. (original) A method according to claim 39, wherein the enhancer is 6-methoxyquinoline.

45. (original) A method according to claim 39, wherein the peroxide is cumene hydroperoxide.

46. (cancelled).

47. (original) A method according to claim 39, wherein the binder comprises an organic polymer capable of adhering to the particulate material.

48. (original) A method according to claim 47, wherein the organic polymer material is selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl pyrrolidone, carboxymethyl cellulose, ethyl cellulose, and acrylic latex.

49. (original) A method according to claim 39, wherein the diagnostic beads further comprise at least one additive.

50. (original) A method according to claim 49, wherein the additive is selected from the group consisting of wetting agents or metal ion sequestrants.

51. (cancelled).

52. (cancelled).

53. (cancelled).

54. (cancelled).

55. (cancelled).

56. (cancelled).

57. (currently amended) Diagnostic beads for the detection of occult blood in animal excreta, especially for use in an animal litter, said beads having a size and shape similar to that of the litter and being homogeneously distributable throughout the litter, said beads comprising

granule-like particles having a diameter of 2 – 5 mm of particulate material selected from the group consisting of silica gel beads, quartz beads, polystyrene beads, alumino silicates, and clay, and

a detection composition attached to said particulate material, wherein the detection composition comprises

- a chromogen,
- a peroxide,
- an enhancer,
- an antioxidant, and
- a binder,

said chromogen being selected to react with occult blood in the animal excreta so as to produce a visible and immediate color change when excreta containing blood comes into contact with said diagnostic beads.

58. (previously presented). Diagnostic beads according to claim 57, wherein the particulate material comprises perlite.

59. (previously presented) An animal litter for the detection of blood in animal excreta comprising diagnostic beads as defined in claim 57.

60. (previously presented) An animal litter according to claim 59, comprising 5-10% diagnostic beads.

61. (previously presented) A method for producing diagnostic beads having a diameter of 2 – 5 mm useful for the detection of occult blood in animal excreta, comprising producing a detection composition, combining said detection solution with a particulate material selected from the group consisting of silica gel beads, quartz beads, polystyrene beads, alumino silicates, and clay, and at least one binder, and producing diagnostic beads through a granulation process, wherein the detection composition comprises a chromogen, a peroxide, an enhancer, an antioxidant, and a binder, said chromogen being selected to react to occult blood in animal excreta so as to produce a visible color change when excreta containing blood comes into contact with said diagnostic beads.

62. (previously presented) A method according to claim 61, wherein the particulate material comprises perlite.